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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 ANKARA 004651

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [ENRG](#) [ECON](#) [TU](#) [IZ](#)

SUBJECT: TURKISH READOUT ON IIG PRESIDENT AL-YAWAR VISIT:
GOOD ON TONE, SHORT ON SPECIFICS

REF: A. ANKARA 4600 AND PREVIOUS

[1](#)B. BAGHDAD 360

Classified By: DCM Robert S. Deutsch for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

Summary

[1](#)1. (C) The GOT is pleased with the Aug. 16-17 visit of IIG President al-Yawar and the IIG ministers for foreign affairs, water resources, and trade. Al-Yawar told the Turks that he and the IIG intentionally chose Turkey for his first major trip abroad, and that they saw Turkey as Iraq's most important neighbor. Contrary to press reports, the Turks found al-Yawar and his delegation forthcoming on issues of importance to the GOT: PKK/Kongra-Gel, Kirkuk, security for the Kirkuk-Ceyhan pipeline, reestablishing a consulate in Mosul, and the status of the Turkmen in the new Iraq. The Turks did not press al-Yawar hard on security for Turkish truckers and other workers in Iraq or Iraqi plans to institute a visa regime. Though the tone appears to have been quite positive, there were relatively few deliverables on key issues; the Turks nonetheless seemed satisfied. The Turks report that al-Yawar was not fully up to speed on the details of a number of issues, and often turned to his ministers for backup. End summary.

[1](#)2. (C) IIG President Ghazi al-Yawar, accompanied by three ministers, visited Ankara Aug. 16-17. Al-Yawar met with Turkish President Sezer, Prime Minister Erdogan, Turkish business leaders, and (along with his corresponding minister) the Turkish foreign, foreign trade, and energy and natural resource ministers. MFA Iraq Chief of Desk Mehmet Kemal Bozay and Iraq Desk Officer Ferhat Alkan gave PolMilOff a readout of the visit on Aug. 18. Alkan sat in on all six of the president's meetings. The MFA officials reported that the tone of the meetings was generally positive and constructive (despite some sniping from the Turkish press), but they noted that al-Yawar was generally weak on detailed knowledge of specific issues, often turning to his ministers for assistance. The Turks praised the ministers accompanying al-Yawar as informed and non-confrontational on the issues, and believe this visit set the table for a successful visit by IIG PM Allawi on Sept. 7. The Turkish press was so negative in its coverage of the first day of the visit (Aug. 16) that al-Yawar himself felt compelled to complain to the press Aug. 17. We noticed that the Aug. 18 papers were somewhat more generous. The Turks told us that they believed the negative press was inaccurate and unfair.

[1](#)3. (C) In the small meeting with Sezer, al-Yawar emphasized that he and the IIG had wanted Turkey to be his first major overseas visit, since he saw Turkey as Iraq's most important neighbor and that, among Iraq's neighbors, Turkey is the only one that could be a model that Iraq can follow as it progresses economically and politically. Al-Yawar expressed his personal support for Turkey's bid for EU membership. Sezer told al-Yawar that Turkey will give agreement for Iraq's new ambassador to Ankara, an issue on which the Turks had been dragging their feet. The two presidents chiefly concentrated on four issues: the Turkish request to open a consulate in Mosul, the terrorist PKK/Kongra-Gel's continuing presence and activities in northern Iraq, the status of Kirkuk, and the status of Iraq's Turkmen population. Interestingly, the issue of security for Turkish truckers (ref a) only came up during the presidents' meeting together with their delegations, not in the one-on-one.

Mosul Consulate

[1](#)4. (C) On the Mosul Consulate, al-Yawar told Sezer that the IIG has no problem with the Turks' opening a consulate (actually reopening its consulate, which had closed in 1995). Al-Yawar said, however, that the security situation would need to improve. In the delegations' meeting, IIG FonMin Zebari added that Iraq is simultaneously reestablishing diplomatic ties with 34 countries, Turkey being among the most important. He added that the Iraqi embassy in Ankara should be "fully operational" before addressing the Mosul issue, but said that perhaps the issue could be revisited during PM Allawi's Sept. 7 visit. (Note: Both the Iraqi Charge here and MFA's Bozay told PolMilOff that they hope the new Iraqi Ambassador, Sabah Omran, will arrive in Ankara in September. End note.)

Al-Yawar: PKK Is Also a Threat to Iraq

15. (C) On the PKK/Kongra-Gel, al-Yawar told Sezer that the organization is a threat for the Iraqis as well, and that he did not want Iraq to be a base for international terrorism. However, al-Yawar added, until the Iraqi security forces are fully trained and equipped, the Iraqis will not be ready to go after the PKK, at least not alone.

As Kirkuk Goes, So Goes Iraq

16. (C) On the Kirkuk issue, al-Yawar said that he welcomed the Turks' expression of concern since it helps the IIG focus on the city. Al-Yawar told the Turks that Kirkuk was the first Iraqi city he visited as president, and he sees Kirkuk--with its ethnic mix--as "a little Iraq." If the Iraqi government is successful in dealing with Kirkuk, then it will be successful in the country overall. The Turks told PolMilOff that al-Yawar spent much of his later meeting with FonMin Gul on Kirkuk, and the President cited a 1975 census of the city which showed the population balance from most to least as Turkmen, Arabs, and Kurds. Al-Yawar said he preferred to use this census as the basis for dealing with the current situation, i.e. to deal with Turkish complaints that Arabs (under Saddam) and Kurds (after Saddam) have been coming into the city and trying to wrest political and economic control from the Turkmen. Al-Yawar said that people returning to the city after Saddam's purges should do so "on a legal basis."

Turkmen in the New Iraq

17. (C) In the Turks' view, Al-Yawar was forthcoming on the issue of Turkmen representation in the new Iraq. He told Sezer that "the Turkmen are our brothers," and said both the Iraqis and the U.S. had made mistakes in underrepresenting the Turkmen. He said it was a mistake that the lone Turkmen representative on the IGC was not from the Iraqi Turkmen Front, and he said her performance in office was poor. He pledged to work for greater Turkmen representation in the future of Iraq, including in government posts.

Erdogan Warns Against Sectarianism

18. (C) Bozay and Alkan told us that President al-Yawar and PM Erdogan covered many of the same issues as in the Sezer meeting, but added that al-Yawar spent a good deal of time expressing his concern over the situation in Najaf and blasting Muqtada al-Sadr for not participating in the political process in Iraq. For his part, Erdogan shared his view that the AKP opposes sectarianism, and that he hopes Iraq will work for the same goal that he seeks: a country whose citizens put their nationality before their sectarian preferences. Erdogan and al-Yawar agreed that avoiding Sunni-Shia violence is a key goal for the new Iraq.

Economic Issues: Second Border Crossing, Trucker Security, Pipeline Security, Water, and Visa Gripest

19. (C) In the larger delegation meeting, IIG FonMin Zebari told the Turks that Iraq supports opening a second border crossing with Turkey, and both sides agreed to technical talks on this issue. According to our MFA sources, neither side pushed for a specific place, although each has a different site in mind. On trucker security, FonMin Zebari said the IIG shares Turkish concerns, but admitted that Iraq cannot now guarantee the security of the truckers. Zebari said that even his own safety and that of everyone else in the IIG are not guaranteed. However, he told the Turks that the Mosul-Baghdad corridor seems to be the main place where insurgents are attacking truckers, and that MNF-I and the Iraqi security forces are working on their procedures for dealing with this particular stretch of road.

110. (C) Iraqi Trade Minister Jabouri told the Turks that the IIG is committed to securing the Kirkuk-Ceyhan pipeline, once the source for one-third of Turkey's crude oil demand. He reported that the IIG has an agreement with a private security firm, which among other steps is providing 17,000 personnel to protect the pipeline.

111. (C) IIG Minister of Water Resources Rashhid told his counterpart, Energy and Natural Resources Minister Guler, that water is vital to Iraq since 60% of its population is engaged in agriculture. Despite Rashid's comments in ref b, MFA told us that the Iraqis showed no animosity toward the Turks on the water issue, and were seeking to make it a technical, rather than a political issue. The two sides agreed to set up technical meetings (some on a trilateral basis with the Syrians) to exchange data on water usage and

demand.

112. (C) Turkish business leaders told al-Yawar in an Aug. 17 breakfast meeting that they are deeply concerned about their security in Iraq, and also annoyed that the IIG has decided to institute a visa regime for Turkey. On security, Zebari repeated the answer he gave to President Sezer in para. nine. On the visa regime (which has not yet been implemented though it was officially announced July 1), Zebari said that Iraq has implemented this regime for all its neighbors (and indeed, for all 34 countries with which it is establishing relations) in an effort to secure Iraq's borders, but that this move was not/not aimed at Turkey. Zebari said that Iraq is committed to maximum flexibility for Turks wishing to travel to Iraq, and that the IIG is looking into also issuing visas at the Turkish border.

Comment: Turks Are Pleased, Await Allawi

113. (C) If the Turks' account is to be believed, al-Yawar came to Ankara eager to establish good relations and to set a constructive tone for the future, the nearest term to include PM Allawi's visit here on Sept. 7. The Turkish press seemed intent on blasting the Iraqis, especially on the visa issue, but the Turkish MFA does not seem overly concerned about this issue. Rather, the GOT is pleased that, in their view, al-Yawar said the right things on almost every issue: Kirkuk, the PKK, the Turkmen, and the Mosul consulate. End comment.
EDELMAN